

Phil 306 : Philosophy of Language

12–15 Page Essay Questions

Preliminaries

- I intend to grade these papers “blind”. To facilitate this, please only put your name on the *last* page of the paper.
- Please bind the pages of your paper with a single paper clip, rather than a staple. (This makes photocopying the papers much easier.)
- If you choose to answer one of the questions below, make sure you answer all parts of the question.
- If you would like to write on a different topic you may, but you should clear it with me *before you start writing the paper*.
- Whichever you choose to do, you should i) organise your paper around arguing for a thesis of your own (just as you did on the 1-page papers) and ii) demonstrate knowledge of the literature that we have studied.
- There should be no significant overlap between the topic of this paper, and the topics of any of your other papers from this course.

Questions

1. What is A. J. Ayer’s view of meaning in *Language, Truth and Logic*? What benefits does his view have? Evaluate his view using the work of at least one other writer we have read this semester.
2. Identify and evaluate two arguments from Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus Philosophicus*.
3. How does Wittgenstein’s approach to language differ in the *Tractatus* and in the *Philosophical Investigations*? Which approach do you take to be the more promising?
4. What is Tarski’s semantic conception of truth? Can a theory of truth aid us in constructing a theory of meaning?
5. What is a theory of meaning? Is it possible to test such theories experimentally?
6. Is the meaning of a sentence a set of possible worlds?
7. Do meanings exist?

Gillian Russell
grussell@artsci.wustl.edu